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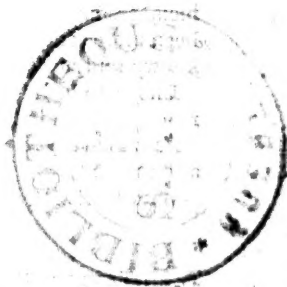
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LETTERS TO DR. MAIR.

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Montreal:  
F. E. GRAFTON,  
82 GREAT ST. JAMES STREET.



MERCHANTS' EXCHANGE,  
MONTREAL, 3rd March, 1865.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

When the pleasure was last enjoyed of seeing you at my house, you expressed a desire to know more fully the grounds of my retirement from the Bible Society.

That, and a like desire expressed by others, together with manifest misapprehension in some quarters of one's views, may induce explanation.

If so, it strikes me that that of a few brief Letters in series would be the simplest and best form in which to put what there may be to say; and it would be my wish, if you have no objection, to address them to yourself. Will you kindly give consent?

They will have to be written during "leisure hours," and these perhaps wide apart; and it may be well not to trouble you with them in manuscript; but this requires your being assured before-hand that they will not contain personalities; nor indeed was there anything of that sort in the discussion. They will, it is one's hope, be found to deal with a principle of some importance; and you shall have an opportunity of reading and judging of them before they come out of the press.

Your "Letters on Biblical Temperance," a copy of which you were so good as to send to me, have, since you were last here, been read with both interest and profit. Thanks to you for putting them in my way. Would that the views they set forth were more generally accepted.

Ever faithfully yours,

JOHN MAIR, Esq., M.D.,  
Kingston.

THOS. M. TAYLOR.

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KINGSTON, March 6th, 1865.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

In reply to your kind note of the 3rd inst, I beg to say that I am gratified by your proposition to address to me a series of Letters explanatory of the reasons which influenced you in retiring from the Bible Society; and not doubting that by doing so, you will confer an obligation on the Church, by bringing under the notice of her members important truths, I cannot withhold my consent, although it might have been more conducive to the object you have in view if you had chosen a name better known and more deserving the honour than my own.

I hope to be interested and benefited by the perusal of your letters, as they may reach me from time to time.

I am glad my letters to E. C. Delavan, Esq., were read by you "with both interest and profit."

With Christian regards to Mrs. Taylor, and family, and other friends,

Believe me, my dear friend,

Yours affectionately, JOHN MAIR.

T. M. TAYLOR, Esq.,  
Montreal.

# LETTERS

ON

## WITHDRAWMENT FROM THE BIBLE SOCIETY,

BY T. M. T., OF MONTREAL,

ADDRESSED TO

JOHN MAIR, ESQUIRE, A.M., M.D., STAFF SURGEON,  
&c., &c., KINGSTON, C.W.

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The writer is aware that owing to the form which has been given to these hurried writings, they are not, strictly speaking, "Letters," and he trusts Dr. Mair and others will excuse this impropriety.

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### LETTER I.

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Discussion arose nearly three years ago in the Montreal Bible Society, within its Committee, of its Laws and Regulations—Third and Fifth, which led to the withdrawalment of one of its members, who had for ten years filled the office of Corresponding Secretary. There seemed no need, on his part, of notice in any public way, nor of mention of this individual retirement. But it would now appear to have excited some interest outside of the Committee, and to be by some persons misunderstood; while, moreover, there are friends here and elsewhere who desire to know what really was the question, and what were the form and nature of its discussion. These may be call and consideration enough, and it may be duty to be no longer silent. If so: be it so! and there shall be the endeavour to fulfil the task.

At the outset then, and once for all, the case may perhaps be fairly enough and simply stated, by saying: it was put to question—WHETHER PAYMENT OF MONEY SHOULD BE THE CONDITION OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE BIBLE SOCIETY. And it is proposed, in the course of these Letters, to relate the discussion that ensued.—If even a few friends of Bible Societies shall take the trouble of reading them, some little dissemination may be given to views

which are here scattered as seed upon the ground. For while the relation must be for the most part of matters of record and fact, there may be need to state and maintain opinions, which, though by many rejected, may by some be considered sound, and may, perhaps, be received and reckoned worthy of dissemination at their hands.

At all events, it will be seen that there is no longer room for misunderstanding the question. It will be seen that one individual did not stand alone, even in the Bible Society, in objection to the "money qualification," but that others of its members stood with him; and if afterwards, separating from these esteemed friends, he withdrew from the Society instead of, with them, biding time in hope of bringing about the change they alike desired, this was because a prominent, and responsible, and onerous post could not well be held, nor its duties be well fulfilled, by one who had reached the conviction that the very basis of association in the Society was itself unsound.

It will also be seen that it was not in the Bible Society only that this question was brought up, but that three kindred Societies were induced to adopt the very change of law proposed to it and rejected. That this afforded support to the views of the writer, he is most willing to own; and it may easily be supposed that he found himself thereby strengthened in conviction and purpose, even to the final act of retirement from a Society in whose work he had been happy to be engaged.

Place in the Councils of the Board of Trade and of one or two other Institutions; in the Magistracy and in the Militia; and also in other useful public undertakings, having in the course of years been once and again declined, mainly in order that all one's time, over and above what domestic duties and mercantile responsibilities demanded, might be given to the service of the Religious Societies—wherein there might be the service of Him who is called Master:—there was no desire on the score of ease and self to escape from toil in the surrender of so useful a position. But there was and is desire to yield whatever testimony one shall be enabled to yield to what may be God's Truth.

It will not be matter of surprise that a mercantile man, cast in the mercantile mould, should have been satisfied for years with the

money membership Law. Indeed, it was when the first clause of Law Third stood alone, and was found to be a shadow merely of something substantial aimed at, that seeing its unreality he endeavoured to give it substance; and in order to secure a higher and more stable, more conservative, and better ascertained constituency, proposed the Life Membership clause, which now forms part of Law Third. How his views became changed, will appear later on in these Letters. But meanwhile the hope may be expressed that the Bible Society—great in its work and noble in its aim—will, by and by, upon the more acceptable proposal of some other one of its friends do away with these objectionable Laws III and V, which for the sake of distinctness may be here, once for all, produced:

III. All persons subscribing two dollars or upwards, per annum, shall be members of this Society; or forty dollars at one time, shall be members for life.

V. No lay member of the Society shall be eligible as a member of the Committee unless he be a *life* member, or pay an annual subscription of at least four dollars.

And will adopt in lieu of them something like this one—once proposed and rejected, but yet perhaps to receive the kinder, and more patient consideration of its Committee—as the Law of Membership of the Bible Society:

“That friends of Bible circulation who are favorable to the objects of this Society, and to its Rules and Regulations, and who shall in any way aid in the promotion of its objects, shall be members.”

But it has already failed of that priority which one could have desired it, as the more prominent Society, to have secured.

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## LETTER II.

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It was by the report of a special Committee that the question now brought under review first came before the Bible Committee, and that report is here recited:—

“The gentlemen appointed by the Bible Society, the Tract Society, and the Canada Foreign Missionary Society, to consider and report upon such change in the mode of obtaining funds for these Societies as might

seem advisable, met at the office of Capt. Maitland, 19th April, 1862. There were present Capt. Maitland (chairman), Messrs. W. C. Baynes, John Dougall, Henry Vennor, John Greenshields, and T. M. Taylor. After prayer and conversation, the following resolutions were moved :

1st. We recommend that the constitutions of the three Societies be so amended, as that money shall not confer membership, nor entitle to any position, and that "friends" not "subscribers" as such be invited to the annual meetings.

2nd. We recommend to these Societies that the present mode of obtaining funds by the going round of collectors making indiscriminate applications for money be discontinued, and that instead thereof, the means be used of printed advertisements and printed appeals, setting forth the operations, wants, and claims of these societies ; and that it be then left to the friends of these societies to send in funds ; or more properly speaking, that it be left to Him whose are the silver and the gold, and who can turn the hearts of all men as He will, to send through such friends what He pleases.

After discussion of these proposed resolutions the meeting adjourned to Saturday the 26th inst., at the same place.

There accordingly met on that day—Capt. Maitland (chairman), Messrs. Baynes, Dougall, Greenshields, and Taylor. The two resolutions were again proposed.

The first was unanimously carried.

As to the second, Mr. Greenshields moved in amendment, "While we agree in the principle embodied in Mr. T——'s motion, we are not yet prepared to recommend it, and we therefore agree to the following resolution :

"That the present mode of sustaining the religious societies is unsatisfactory and should be abolished. That in lieu of that system annual subscriptions and voluntary donations be relied upon exclusively. That the different Societies be recommended to carry out these resolutions, as to them may seem fit : suggesting that in the meantime appeals be made to the public, and books opened at the Depository for donations and subscriptions.

This resolution was passed, and it was agreed that a copy of these minutes signed by the Committee be remitted to the three Societies.

After prayer the meeting closed.

(Signed),

J. H. MAITLAND,

H. VENNOR,

JOHN GREENSHIELDS,

JOHN DOUGALL,

W. C. BAYNES,

THOS. M. TAYLOR.

Here, therefore, there was, by a unanimous vote, a distinct recommendation of the abolition of the money qualification Law.

It was at its meeting in May, 1862, that this report was submitted to the Committee of the Bible Society, when it was re-



solved:—"That said report be received and laid upon the table for consideration at the next regular meeting of Committee, and that the sub-Committee be discharged."

Accordingly at the meeting in June it is recorded:

"The report of the sub-Committee on collections was taken into consideration in accordance with the minute of last meeting, when after some discussion, it was resolved to let the matter stand over for further action at some future period, and that a special meeting be called for that purpose."

At this special meeting held in July, 1862, it was resolved:

"That the Committee, having heard read that portion of the report of the sub-Committee, which refers to the membership of this Society, and having given respectful consideration to the same, do not see sufficient reason to recommend the adoption of the proposed change in the constitution."

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### LETTER III.

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THERE was no further action till October, when it is recorded of the meeting of that month: "The Corresponding-Secretary read a protest signed by himself, against Article III, of the Constitution of this Society, being any longer entertained and observed; and it was ordered that said protest lie on the table."

*To the Committee of the Montreal Auxiliary Bible Society:*

DEAR SIRS,—There were recently proposed to you, and almost unanimously rejected by you, two resolutions, which, although already upon the Society's record, I judge it best here to recite: \* \* \*

It is fair to you to state, and it bears with some weight on any further discussion which may arise, that while you formally rejected these resolutions, you yet in the main admitted their soundness and scripturalness. Their theory, you said, was good, but a better age would need to come before they could be practicable.

Of these two resolutions, the first is, perhaps, the more important, for as it relates to the Society's Constitution and constituency, it must essentially affect character and action, and here at once comes up the question which I desire to see settled. If it be asserted and agreed that our Society is an association of persons for carrying on the commercial enterprise of printing and circulating the Bible, then conduct it on commercial principles, and class it, as it should be classed, with certain

other efforts in which good men engage, which, however excellent, are not entitled to be called religious; then bring into your association men, who are not necessarily religious—then make money the qualification of membership—and act throughout upon the principle of doing our part of the work according to the best commercial practice, and to a certain extent in a religious way; asking God, as we do, to be pleased to own and bless whatever He can own and bless of the work. But if there be claimed for it a far higher character, if it be claimed that there is no other work of man short of preaching the Gospel of salvation and direct testifying for Christ, which stands on the same level with it; then conduct it upon the principles befitting such a pretension.

I say this is the very question to be settled.

Is this God's work, or is it man's work? If His, conduct it in His way, according to the indications of His mind in the guide He gives us. If it be ours, then we may conduct it in our own way. If it be our work, admit and invite to fellowship in it whom we choose, any who have money to give, and make such our partners, even though they may have no special sympathy with us or our Society, or the Book we circulate, or the Christ who saves us. If, on the other hand, it be God's work, open the door to fellowship with all those who are His, and, therefore, may be reckoned friends of this Society, though not subscribers—praying partners—and, like the widow whom the Saviour commended, and like multitudes of others who love Him and His cause, they may not have more than two mites of money to bestow; and give up a law, which would exclude those who, like Peter, can say "Silver and gold have I none." "Thou shalt not sow with divers seeds, nor plough with an ass and an ox together, nor wear a garment of woollen and linen together," was once the Lord's command. The vessels of the Lord's service were always to be pure. The trumpets to be blown before Israel's advancing host were two, but they were each to be of pure silver, and of one piece—emblem this, of the purity without admixture, which the Lord would have in all things pertaining to His service. "Can two walk together except they be agreed? Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; and what concord hath Christ with Belial, or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel"—are far reaching queries, and all of them applicable, as I submit, to our case.

On these grounds, and according to this principle, I do beg to be allowed to testify against that clause of the Constitution of this Society which makes money the qualification of membership, as one dishonoring to the Lord, and as one which brings into the fellowship of His work many, doubtless, who have not yet yielded *themselves* to Christ, which, I submit, according to the light He affords us in His word, must ever be displeasing to Him. As such, and therefore I, for one, protest against it, and entreat you to abolish it.

The second rejected resolution proposes a change in the mode of obtaining funds for this Society. \* \* \* \*



I contend we are wrong in principle; and that may be the very reason why difficulties beset our practice. For tabernacle and temple God's people of old were called to give, and they gave; but I do not see that collectors went round to gather. It would seem from New Testament history, that God's people laid up and gave as He had prospered them, and brought it to the appointed place. The messengers of the Churches sometimes went to bear away the aggregated contributions of the many; but it does not appear that they collected after our modern fashion, in these days of a more exactly commercial rather than a purely spiritual way of doing what are considered religious things.

If all the members of this Committee are not believers in the scriptural sense, we ought to be—I think you will allow this to be taken for granted—and if believers, we should accept the dogma, “without faith it is impossible to please God,” and are of the class who walk by faith, and not merely faith in Christ for personal salvation, but faith in exercise in the daily duty and service of life. And in an enterprise which has for its object the circulation of God's Word, and thereby through His blessing the salvation of men and the manifestation of His own glory; and you say, I understand this is our object—this faith may be fairly claimed to have proper sphere; and can it be denied that its suitable application and exercise would be in the work of this Society? Indeed, if in this work there is not room and place for faith, we may be sure there is something wrong, and an order of proceeding which shuts it out may be seriously questioned. But is it found in our going from street to street and door to door, over certain well beaten paths, asking all alike, friend or foe, believer and unbeliever, to give money for His service; be it remembered for the conversion of souls and the manifestation of His glory? Would there not the rather be faith found in setting plainly and publicly forth the character and claims of this work, its successes, and the need of funds for it; and leaving it to those whom such statements reach to give or withhold, as their own consciences shall under God determine, not doubting that He will be the best mover of the minds of His own people. This would be more like what was done for tabernacle and temple service, and for the objects of Christian benevolence unfolded in the New Testament, where we may, perhaps, read of Cæsar's tax gatherers going about to collect, but not of believers doing so for the work of the Lord.

It is because I do not see any scriptural sanction for our present plan, that I believe I am right in testifying against it. Believing it to be dishonoring and displeasing to our Lord and Master, whom we profess to serve, I protest against it, and entreat you to adopt the change proposed.

Some object—the order and practice of our great Parent institution, and of all the great societies of the world are now followed, and why ask us to depart from examples so illustrious and so safe? There is, doubtless, much in the history and traditions of these societies that is good and worthy, and let them have all due honor for the great work for the

world, which God has honored them to accomplish; but they have had their trials, and have adopted changes, and they may yet adopt this very one for aught we know. But let that be yea or nay, we need not in all things follow their way if we see a better. We have been told this would be presumption. It was, perhaps, thought a very great piece of presumption in Gideon to go out with his little company to an achievement to which the greater multitude was not chosen, and a greater presumption, perhaps, in David,—beardless stripling as he was,—to go forth, stone and sling in hand, against the champion of the Philistine host, while the disciplined soldiers, the veterans of Saul's army, stood far in the rear.

Others object—your funds will fail, and your Society be insolvent, and your work be stopped, if you don't collect. If name be given to this utterance, is it not unbelief, infidelity to God, the very essence of the Spirit which led God's professing people in former days, and sadly too often now leads them down to Egypt for help, instead of making the arm of the Lord of Hosts their trust? Here too may be answered the objection which says, remove the safeguard which your subscribing membership affords, and you will be swamped by false friends and by foes. Here again is trust in man. But, hitherto the Lord hath preserved and helped us. Let us, therefore, raise our Ebenezer, and trust Him more.

What an unheard of way of carrying on a Society, others have in objection exclaimed! What an unheard of way of taking a walled city! doubtless said men of merely military notions among Israel, when the command was to march seven times around Jericho, blowing ram's horns, as the means of its overthrow. And perhaps, there were those among the army of Joshua, who thought the battle against Amalek was won by their strategy and prowess; while the fact is, they were indebted for their safety and success to the holding up to Heaven of Moses' hands upon the hill top, while they fought down upon the plain. Now, I do not say that our case is similar to these, and that we are to expect special manifestations and interpositions on our behalf; but they, at all events, teach that it does not become us to plight our entire faith and practice to one particular order of means, which others before us have used, and which we may have thought under all circumstances the best; and they surely may lead us calmly to consider the question: would the Lord have us now abandon our accustomed means, and take some other way? "*Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition.*"

Finally, others object—you now oppose a system of things you have helped to strengthen. I confess it. I confess to you I have for these ten years back joined in using much of the wood, hay, stubble of man's gatherings and ways, instead of appealing to the Lord Himself to give the truer materials of gold, silver, and precious stones, which His own grace and spirit alone can furnish for His work. I acknowledge, I now

try to undo something I may have helped to do, and pull down something I may have helped to build up; but it is not too late to confess an error, and stand ready to retrace a wrong step. Such are now my utterance and my attitude. We have been inconsistent with ourselves. I have written, and you have accepted over and over again, reports of this Society, which have declared our conviction that success in this work could be from God only, saying not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord; and yet, nevertheless, in various ways, we have brought up to the work things not His, but ours; thus honouring Him more with our words than in our practice.

Our Society has had this year put into its treasury a sum of £50, and the Tract Society larger sums, from unknown human hands. They seem to have come on the principle here recommended, and serve to illustrate and enforce it—promises these, as they may fairly be taken to be, like the cluster of grapes from Eshcol, of the rich fruits of the land our faith is invited to enter.

Let us then adopt a theory of action, which we have admitted to be scriptural and sound; not fearing that He who has guided and blessed our Society hitherto, will keep and sustain us in the practice of it, and not doubting that they who honour Him, He will honour.

Montreal, October 7th, 1862.

At the meeting in May, 1863, under the administration of a new Committee, notice was given of an intention to move at next meeting of Committee, the following resolution:

“That this Committee resolves to recommend, that Laws and Regulations III and V of this Society, be abolished; and that in lieu thereof, the following be the Law of membership: “That friends of Bible Circulation, who are favourable to the objects of this Society and to its rules and regulations, and who shall in any way aid in the promotion of its objects, shall be members.”

The Minutes of the June meeting state, “Mr. Taylor, in accordance with notice given at the last meeting minute X, brought forward the resolution contained in said minute, which, being moved and seconded, was, on a division, adopted.” **THUS, DISTINCTLY, SO FAR AS THE COMMITTEE WAS CONCERNED, THE WRITER’S MOTION, THIS TIME OFFERED AS A SUBSTANTIVE MOTION, WAS CARRIED.**

## LETTER IV.

It was now in order to bring down to the annual meeting to be held in January, 1864, a resolution, based upon the vote of the Committee of June, 1863, to amend the Society's Laws and Regulations. But it having been objected that the vote of June had been taken when most of the Ministers on the Committee were absent at their respective ecclesiastical councils, the following memorandum was, in all courtesy and good feeling, submitted to the meeting of Committee prior to the annual assembly.

Having been told that some of the members of this Committee think that they were subject to disadvantage by the vote of June 9th, 1863, on amendment of the Constitution, having been taken at that time, the undersigned, mover of the resolution, while claiming that the resolution was passed after due notice, and fairly according to the rules of practice in such cases, nevertheless, in order to allow of another vote of the Committee upon it, at some future time, requests that for the present, action on said resolution may be suspended.

COMMITTEE ROOM,  
BIBLE HOUSE, Jan. 5th, 1864.

It was agreed that the above be placed on the Minutes, and that action in the matter be suspended, in order that the same may be re-considered after the annual meeting.

Frank, full, friendly discussion of this question had ever been desired; open and above-board had been and must be the proceedings; the Committee, as the council of the Society, must deliberate and determine in a way satisfactory to itself; only upon its vote and recommendation distinctly recorded, would the question be brought before a public meeting; no thought whatever had there been or was there of debating it elsewhere than in Committee, for *there* properly was its arena; and decision there would be held to be conclusive. With these views it was, that its mover most readily proposed to throw open the question for another vote. No object whatever had he but to elicit truth and build the Society upon a better foundation. Accordingly, it was agreed, at the ordinary meeting in February, that a special meeting should be held on the 9th of that month, to take the matter again into consideration, and of that special meeting it is recorded:—

"The resolution of Minute X of this Committee's meeting May 5th, 1863, was moved by Mr. Taylor, seconded by Rev. W. Bond, and also (in the event of its being carried) that a special meeting of the members of this society be called, in accordance with Article XI of the Constitution to give effect to the preceding resolution."

Now the motion here offered was word for word that written in Letter III. And as for this motion, let it be noted that it dealt with and was meant only to deal with the Law of membership which provides that the payment of two dollars per annum shall make whoever pays it a member of the Bible Society; and which enables any person, Protestant or Roman Catholic, Jew or Turk, Infidel or Pagan, to become a member of the Bible Society, by the payment, simply and alone, of that amount. This is, therefore, the one legal *condition* or *qualification* of membership; but though either of these terms may be used, accuracy is claimed for *qualification*, for two dollars is the legal power or requisite in the case. Observe, Rule III accepts no qualification of the nature of natural endowment or acquirement, nor of executive skill or tact, nor of piety,—though it is only fair to allow that these are supposed,—but it does not require these; nor where they are found, are they held to be sufficient of themselves to entitle to membership; and money is thus exalted to be "the without which not" of membership. It is thus not the head that may work for the Society, nor the heart that may love it, but the pocket that bestows two dollars that secures place in the honourable fellowship of the Association.

It is desired, therefore, that at this point this motion—already in these Letters twice recited—should be marked as being directed against the money Laws of the Society; and as the motion, in exact and direct terms, which was alone under consideration, and upon which the final vote and action were taken. It failed; for an amendment in these words:

"That although the constitution of this Society admits of improvement, the experience of forty years' trial, with an annually increasing prosperity, seems to indicate that the present organization is effective. This Committee deems it, therefore, inexpedient to make any change," being by a large majority accepted, the motion stood rejected. This ended discussion. It was one's decision before-hand that this vote should be final, and indicative of duty in respect of

longer connection with the Society. The light now thrown upon this point of duty was clear; and soon afterwards the following letter was addressed to the President:

To the HON. JAMES FERRIER, President, &c., &c. :

DEAR SIR,—It results from the vote of 9th February, that I now ask you to be so good as to receive, by this present communication, resignation of my office of Corresponding Secretary, and surrender of my position of Life Member, of the Montreal Bible Society.

The Committee's rejection of the motion of that date, regarded simply as a defeat, does not weigh with me a feather's weight; nor have I been in haste to act upon it. But the principle involved has an importance, in my view of it, which I have felt during its discussion, would probably demand, sooner or later, this action.

I have delayed till now, keeping meanwhile my own counsel, in order to get the Report out of the printer's hands, and to leave not any unfinished work before the Committee. The Report will be on the table at the next meeting, and I am not aware of any old business to come up; so that I think I withdraw at the moment of the least inconvenience to the Committee.

Mid-day and mid-night hours have been given to the service of the Society during the years I have had its correspondence to conduct, its reports to write, its papers to issue, and its meetings to manage, involving in the whole no inconsiderable expenditure of time; but these labors and this time have I trust been given to the Lord, and not to men; and if they have been accepted of Him, that is all I desire. Now I leave the Society, and these labors cease. I trust this also is acceptable to Him, for I think it is according to His will, so far as that is made apparent to me.

I am thankful that although I cannot longer consistently work with the Society, as now constituted, I can still wish it, in its noble object—the circulation of God's Word—hearty God-speed.

Merchants' Exchange,

March 31, 1864.

Resolutions in reply were passed by the Committee, and conveyed to the writer, which being printed in the Report presented at the recent Annual Meeting (the forty-fourth), need not be here noticed, further than to say, they demand, and they have received, grateful acknowledgment of the kind and generous terms in which they accept the resignation which occasioned them.

The Religious Book and Tract Society, and the Canada Foreign Missionary Society had sometime previous to this adopted the change hereinbefore discussed; and had amended their Laws so



as to abolish the money qualification. It was also previous to this time that the Montreal Sabbath Association, committing its Constitution for revision to the hands of the writer, accepted it as revised, stript of the money qualification. Thus, as stated in a former Letter, three Societies adopted the change which the Bible Society rejected; nor will it be necessary to prove that the Committees of these Societies were men every way as competent to deal with the question proposed, in common and alike to them all, as were those of the Bible Committee; and more need not be said. This furthermore will show that one's retirement from the Presidency of the Tract Society, which is only recent, had no relation whatever to this question; on the contrary, it was a step taken on personal and private grounds.

So far, the records have been dealt with; future Letters must be taken up, if one shall be enabled, with the argument of the question.

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## LETTER V.

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Now, in respect of the already cited Laws, third and fifth, which are herein condemned, it was asserted and is still maintained, that:

1. For the purposes intended they are useless.
2. They are often violated.
3. They are not legally operative.
4. They are unwisely restrictive and exclusive.
5. They may safely be abolished.
6. They are a basis of association not warranted by the Scriptures.
7. They do not call for the exercise of Faith.

The former five of these objections are on the ground of policy and expediency, or the using of the best means to secure the end in view. The latter two lead into the higher ground of ethics and Scripture.

To state what was replied is not so easy, for there are involved in the very nature of the case difficulty and delicacy in undertak-

ing to state the grounds of opposition to one's own views, and to allow to these, even in respect of statement *merely*, what may be expected at one's hands would, perhaps, be allowing to them more than they really merit. But justice shall be ample; and friends of the opposite part will, it is hoped, admit that their case is fairly and fully brought forward, when it said that their objections to the change of laws proposed were these:

1. That the money law works well, and has never caused any difficulty.

2. That under it the Society has been successful and prosperous.

3. That the British and Foreign Bible Society, and the old Religious Societies, have for the last half century, maintained membership on the ground of money subscriptions.

4. That without the money law, the members could not be ascertained nor appealed to in case of need.

5. That it would be disorderly and destructive to the Society to be without such a law.

6. That, though sometimes a dead letter, it is, nevertheless, necessary.

7. The Hamilton case.

But not one argued in favor of the money law on principle, not one maintained that it is, in itself, simply and alone considered, a good and fitting law for the Bible Society; but only to be tolerated because necessary under our present necessarily imperfect order of things. This latter being thus confessed to be the case, all the respect and consideration which it was found possible to accord to these objections, being allowed, they nevertheless failed to weaken the writer's convictions, but on the contrary served only to give them strength and confirmation. Nor was there anything in the spirit in which these objections were urged to secure to them such consideration as, for lack of cogency, they had failed to command.

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## LETTER VI.

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But it was the Hamilton case, which had just then occurred, and which being put in as effective a way as it was capable of being

put, that made the vote overwhelmingly adverse to the motion; and it will help to clear our way if that case be now examined, and estimated at what it is really worth. Owing, and thanks to the courtesy of a friend, who was a dispassionate observer of the doings at Hamilton, such facts are now before the writer, as will enable him, unless he mistakes, adequately and intelligently to enter upon such examination. Nor is it difficult to detect the germ of the troubles which became so sadly developed in the Hamilton Society. Its own friends will scarcely claim that at that time there was much of the spirit which the Bible enjoins working among them, but rather the spirit of mammon and of the world, for it would seem that a miserable question of the payment of a dollar in an individual case—that being the membership fee,—was the very root of evil and bitterness in their midst.

It was, indeed, because the dollar was not paid in one given instance, and because the Secretary, therefore, constitutionally, though arbitrarily and in the face of the sufferance of the Committee, dropped the name, that a minority thought his act illegal, unconstitutional and improper,—the two former of which it was not, although the latter it may, under the circumstances, have been,—while the majority thought otherwise and sustained him; it was thus that the Committee became split in twain, dividing into separate and hostile parties. Pity, is it not, that upon no question of principle, but upon one of mere money and of personalities, members of the Bible Society should have become so antagonistic, as to have carried this and further and future disagreements before the public, in the daily press, and at regular meetings it is true, but also at irregular and noisy meetings, where were persons not in any true sense either members or friends of the Society? Thus it was that the door was opened for the enemy to come in to blaspheme,—and he did his work.

One feels that if men were called into the service of these societies on the ground of their love to Christ, to souls, and to the Bible, and of their readiness and ability to aid them, either as or as not givers of money, this very division and these difficulties would not have arisen. Where and when the Spirit of Christ is not, there and then is not Christ, however much we may suppose ourselves in character or service His followers.

It needs to be observed that it was not interlopers, nor foes from the streets, but leading members of the Committee that promoted these disturbances; who when defeated in Committee, instead of submitting, went to the public meeting and made it a place of strife, opposed the constituted authorities and the due order of proceedings, announced a public meeting, and not a meeting of the Society, and endeavored to pack it with those who, by their acts, proved themselves to be lacking the spirit of the Bible Society, lacking the essential characteristics of its friends, and, therefore, lacking any God-given or even man-given title to be there.

Was it not members of the Committee themselves who, when the officers and majority of the Committee withdrew, declaring there could and would be no meeting, insisted, as the minority and dissentient party, that the meeting should continue, and then in the midst of a crowd—who can say these were *friends* of the *Bible Society*? held informal and unauthorized meetings, under the pretended authority of Law VIII of the Society? No more justified were they legally or morally, than any score of persons members or otherwise of the Bible Society in Montreal would be justified in calling a public meeting to be held next week, of whoever might come, to name themselves or their friends the managing body of the Society in place of the persons who are now, in the usual way of the Society's appointment, in that position.

And yet these are the scenes and the actings, which have been held up in solemn warning against "friends,"—persons favorable and aidant to the Society—and not subscribers only being members, and as such entitled to take part in the public assemblies of the Society.

Far otherwise are the teachings to our mind of these scenes and actings. Violent men, shouting and yelling, swinging clubs and breaking seats, might by the payment of a dollar each—no costly thing—have acquired the legal and constitutional right as members of the Hamilton Bible Society to attend its meetings and act thus, but never as "friends" could they, under any process, or by any means whatsoever, acquire such a right, for with friends questions of propriety and of morality must have place but not so necessarily with subscribers.

Such is this case, according to the best judgment of it the present

writer can give, which was adduced as timeous and sufficient, and which proved adequate to admonish against the proposed abolition of our money membership law.

The inference drawn by friends in Hamilton and here from these troubles is, that subscribers only should be allowed to take part at Bible Society meetings. The writer's inference is the reverse; and in favor of inviting friends—persons favourable to the work and objects of the Bible Society—to its meetings; for, while under either form of call, disturbers of quiet, and persons unfriendly to the Society might present themselves,—the Common Law, *if it must needs be invoked*, would rule out these latter persons as not friends and as having no title to be there; while under the money membership law, if they had chosen beforehand to pay their title money, the Common Law would protect them, even to the damage of the Society.

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## LETTER VII.

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1. It is now in order to repeat, concerning Laws III and V, *that for the purposes intended, they are unnecessary*. To obtain a constituency, and to obtain money, are assumed to be the chief objects of these laws. The result is a city contribution of not much more than two thousand dollars, which divided by two dollars, as the membership fee, would import a membership of a thousand persons, which is in fact greatly beyond the actual number, it being not more than four hundred. It can scarcely be supposed that these subscriptions are made merely to qualify as members, although in fact some of them do little more. Donations apart from the annual subscriptions are seldom received in this country. In England the donations are ten times the amount of the subscriptions, and although these donations impart the title of life membership they are so much in excess of the amount necessary thereto, that they must be considered to be given from a higher motive. If these persons who are thus the best friends of the Society, had no return in the shape of life membership, for their money, they would still give. The higher motive would, of itself, be adequate. May it not, therefore, be considered that a specific annual subscription is not

necessary to make sure of a constituency or body of reliable friends, nor of sufficient and assured pecuniary support; for the higher constituency and the most money are obtained without it? If anywhere, then here, the voluntary principle may be trusted.

2. It was asserted of Laws III and V *that they are often violated*. By these laws of the Montreal Bible Society no layman can be a member of the Committee, unless he pay an annual subscription of at least four dollars; nor a clergyman unless he pay two dollars. By the laws of its Branches no person can be a member of a Branch without payment of one dollar. But it is notorious that both in the Montreal Committee, and in the Committees of its Branches, there have been and are members, both lay and clerical, who, under the Constitution, are not entitled to their seats. Being useful members, they are wisely, and sometimes almost of necessity, as the best men in the place, called to the Committees. The truth is, however, that thereby these money laws of the Society are violated. Better then abolish them! It is replied, "Retain them, though in some cases they are a dead letter." "Dead things are, if offensive, even to weak people, best to be buried out of sight," is the appropriate rejoinder.

3. It was asserted that Laws III and V *are not made legally operative to the creation of a Membership*. The accounts of the Society, including subscriptions, are closed on the 31st December of every year. The subscriptions last acknowledged are, therefore, for 1864. But the Annual Meeting was held in the last week of January, 1865, for which current year there are yet no Subscribers; and, therefore, under the constitution, no members, except the Life Members and Life Governors, who number only half-a-dozen. The practice of the Society, therefore, frustrates its own laws.

## LETTER VIII.

4. It was asserted *that Laws III. and V. are unwisely restrictive and exclusive*.

There is blessing upon him who considereth the poor. And if "the poor we have always with us," is there not the duty in all



our arrangements to give them as much place and consideration as we can? Yet out of the fellowship of the Bible Society is kept every one who cannot pay two dollars a year; and out of its Committee are kept good men and true who cannot pay four dollars a year. But if any where, surely in this Society the rich and poor should meet together. It was said by the oldest Minister on the Committee, in the position of City Pastor, that he had been unable to suggest, for service on the Committee, the names of excellent and worthy men, every way suitable, because he could not put them in the way of being obliged to pay the annual four dollars.

The bulk of the piety of the Church is among the poor; and upon these poor we learn the Lord looks with especial favor. These poor sympathize with the Bible work, and give it their prayers,—which prayers are, it may be, more potential than the fewer prayers but more numerous pounds of richer persons. Now, why set up a money bar to these being in the membership of the Bible Society, or to such of them as have every qualification, excepting money, being allowed sometimes to serve on its Committee? Why not enlist them and all their sympathies more fully? Let them freely come! Are not these money laws unwisely restrictive and exclusive?

5. It was asserted of these Laws *that they may safely be abolished*. To keep the Bible work in the hands of persons friendly to it, and to protect it from the interference of others; also to protect meetings from the intrusion of evil disposed persons, are, it is supposed, objects of these laws.

Education and habit and supposed necessity lead to their use, and they have the sanction of the practice of other Societies. But, waiving for a moment the objection 3rd., so fatal to them, and allowing all payers of two dollars to be legally members, was there ever an annual meeting, even of 3000 persons, wherein upwards of 200 were members?

Supposing the full membership to be, of men and women, four hundred,—and it has never been more,—would it be possible to get all these together? It would be questionable if, under any circumstance, 200 could be mustered. But suppose foes desired

the overthrow of the Society, could they not qualify, as members, by the payment of two dollars each for a number sufficient to come in and out-vote the others?

This would be legal under the Constitution, and not costly. The Annual Meetings are composed of "friends," not to any extent even constructively of "members," and not at all, legally speaking, of "members;" these latter leaving ample room for the presence and the work of foes. Yet there has been rejected a proposed law which gives "friends," instead of "subscribers," as the constituency; and a law is retained which practically gives nobody. Under the membership of "friends," only friends may come to meetings; while under the money law friends and foes alike may come. The former, therefore, is the safer.

There might be differences and discussions, and even dissensions in a general meeting of friends, as well as in one of members; but still a meeting under the law of "friends," as proposed, would even in such circumstances still be the safer. Friends could not be overthrowers or destroyers.

Moreover, while it is plain that the payment of two dollars now gives to any one the legal right and title to come to meetings even to obstruct and to overturn, the proposed membership of "persons favorable to the object of the Society, and who in any way aid its operations," has the protection of the Common Law of the land. Far be it from us to invoke this; but if it must be invoked, the Common Law would put out of meetings, and afterwards declare null and void the acts of persons *unfavorable* to the declared objects of the Society. Thus even here, upon this lower ground, the safeguard is strongest under the proposed law; and this is an argument in its favor.

But what meanwhile has become of faith in God and his work in us and whose servants we are, in all this view of the case? "It is excluded." Yet safest are they who trust in the Lord. Who but He protected the Orphan House at Halle, when Bonaparte invaded Germany; and his troops were devastating all around them? who but He prompted to the setting of a guard of those very troops around that home of the fatherless at Halle. And is it not said of Daniel, when cast into the lions' den, "no manner of hurt was found upon him, *because he believed in his Lord?*" Herein

is safety ; and if the Bible Society believes this, it may do without the laws in question. But—" *If ye will not believe, neither shall ye be established.*"

## LETTER IX.

6. It was asserted that *these Laws form a basis of association not warranted by the Scriptures.* We are now come to the core of the question. The object of the Montreal Society is declared to be to co-operate with the BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY, in promoting the distribution of the Holy Scriptures, both at home and abroad.

This work includes translating, printing, selling, and giving the Book, and receiving and using money therein. It is most desirable that all persons who take part therein should be really Christians, but there will, in the nature of the case, be handicraftsmen, doing their day's work for their day's wage, who are not such. But it is surely reasonable to expect that associations of men who undertake this work in its entirety and as means to an end so noble as that proposed, should be composed of Christians, and that they should be associated and their work be done on principles which accord with God's revealed will. No one regards these societies as having any design of money making, nor are there many persons who say that their enterprise is anyway commercial. On the contrary, it is claimed that as it is the dissemination of God's word without note or comment which is the grand object of these societies, and such dissemination having as its end the glory of God and the salvation of men, it is therefore a religious work.

Hence, the incongruity is manifest of men who are not believers being associated with the sublime object in view of giving to perishing men the Book of God, which proclaims "*this is the will of God that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent.*" This would seem therefore, at first sight, to be a work belonging exclusively to the Church of Christ. Such is the position taken. It was indeed denied, during the debate on this question, that this is a work of the Church, but this denial when other arguments had failed,

was not, and is not accepted. Such is not the usual theory. Such is not the doctrine of Bible Society speeches, nor of reports, appeals and publications. On the contrary, it is held by these that this work of Bible dissemination *is the work of the Church.*

Now, if this be the work of the Church, it cannot be that any payment of money should, by itself, constitute, whoever pays it, a partner therein; yet, this is the place given to money in the terms of the Rules and Regulations of the Bible Society. But money has no such function anywhere in the word of God, nor is it there made of much account. It is acceptable as a free will offering to the Lord, if first self had been offered; but it is no where therein held to entitle to place, position or privilege in the Lord's house or in His service. "*Thy money perish with thee,*" were the terrible words spoken to one who had attempted to give to money its wrong place. The presenting of ourselves as a living sacrifice is the first thing required. True service begins with this. And here may not a notable distinction be drawn between what is religious and what is philanthropic. We have seen what is essential to religious service. But one may hold the post of governor of an hospital, or of a house of industry, or director of an educational institution, to which money is the first condition, and the duties of which may be fulfilled by natural gifts and aptitudes without grace (the duty of every man to believe the gospel and become a subject of grace being of course all the while maintained). But in the work of the Bible Society, which, on the ground hereinbefore considered, is the work of the Church, the condition which is of grace, the being born unto life by the word, should be "the without which not" the first title to membership, and gifts, aptitudes, and money be allowed to come afterwards and be accepted in their secondary place.

It is the reasonable evidence of men's being believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, and as such interested in Bible dissemination, that is presented, as the essential qualification, by the membership law proposed, and therefore, it calls for such friendship, sympathy, and aid in the Bible work as believers alone can truly exhibit. For such to ally themselves together for this work, not as servants of Christ, but upon a money basis, seems to be wrong; and for such to ally themselves upon a money basis with persons who are not

servants of Christ, seems to be doubly wrong, and has in it two elements of evil. This two-fold evil the proposed law of membership, it is respectfully submitted, eschews.

Now, it should be an earnest query with us, is that really evil which is here called evil? Let the Word of God, in the following quotations, speak for itself:

*"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what partnership hath righteousness with unrighteousness (or rather lawlessness), and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God: as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (II Cor. vi. 14-18.)*

Under the Mosaic economy we learn the same moral principle.

*"Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with divers seeds; lest the fruit of thy seed which thou hast sown, and the fruit of thy vineyard be defiled. Thou shalt not plough with an ox and an ass together. Thou shalt not wear a garment of divers sorts, as of woollen and linen together." (Deut. xxii. 9-11; Lev. xix. 19.)*

These Scriptures are sufficient to show the moral evil of the unequal yoke; and in the light which they afford is not the yoke into which Christian men are brought by association upon the present money basis, an unequal yoke, and one by which they are shackled? Are they not so far identified with evil and so far not identified with God?

True it is, many apply this doctrine of the unequal yoke to domestic life only; but it surely has its commercial side, and very plainly its religious side also. And it is a master-piece of Satan's work, to bind believers by the unequal yoke in all these respects, and to delude them with the hope that within it they may nevertheless work easily and well. There is oftentimes a charitable yielding in such circumstances on the score of expediency, in order to secure otherwise good ends. But the Word says, *"To obey is better than sacrifice."*

## LETTER X.

At the risk of being tedious, the subject of the former letter must be continued through this one. For it seems necessary furthermore to observe: that if the dissemination of God's word is a religious work, a work for God, and must be done according to His will, it is only they who are His children and as such having His Spirit who can will and do according to His will. Only such can be "workers with God." Saul's armour did not suit David when he went forward as God's child and servant to do God's work. "*Of his own will begat he us BY THE WORD OF TRUTH.*" "*Being born again BY THE WORD OF GOD, which liveth and abideth forever.*" Note here the function of God's word; and here arises another proof that the work of scattering it abroad is work for God. Does it not follow fairly from this that it is only men who are born again by the word of God who can be acceptable and acknowledged, as well as qualified instruments, in the further dissemination of that word that others may be begotten thereby? It is only if we are acting for God and He is acting with us that there is real power. Now, whomsoever God calls to a work, let them do it; and in whatsoever way He appoints its being done, let it be done. If no injunction in express terms is to be found,—and there is, of course, none such addressed particularly to the question now under consideration,—principles and examples must guide. One example which well illustrates the principle may suffice: it is to some extent analogous.

The ark of God, containing the tables of testimony, was to be brought up from among the Philistines. God had plainly prescribed the mode of its conveyance—upon the shoulders of living men set apart for that purpose. But David took the Philistine's way of doing it. It was carried by oxen and cart; and when they came to the threshing floor of Nachon the oxen stumbled. No wonder, for the Levites had not been employed! Uzza, who put forth his hand to stay the ark, was smitten and died; and we are admonished, "*If judgment first begin at us, what shall the end be of those that obey not the Gospel?*" God will not tolerate our working upon wrong principles without showing His displeasure.



We shall stumble. There is due order, and the Levites were appointed to carry the ark of God. Is it too far-fetched to say that the analogy of the ark containing the *tables of testimony*, and of the *Word of God* as we have it, is such as to suggest that if the one was to be moved, so the other should be disseminated by God's own servants.

It has been seen that money has no God-given function in this work; that living men are called to it; and that God's work is to be done in His way: that it is to be done by God's people only as alone fitted for it, and as separated from others, is a further consideration. It was of old said "*the people shall dwell alone.*" Scriptures already quoted show that a separated condition is that of Christ's followers. Jehoshaphat allied himself with Ahab for a religious object, and disaster befell him; and without adducing other such cases the topic of this letter may be concluded with a statement and exemplification to be found in Ezra. When those not of Israel proposed to help to build God's House, saying, we seek your God as ye do, and we do sacrifice unto Him,—a good profession certainly,—it is recorded: "But Zerubbabel, and Jeshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel, said unto them, Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the Lord God of Israel." In this there is an illustrious example of separation and association, — *separation* from those who are not the Lord's, and *association* with those who are the Lord's in His service. Such course is often called narrow-minded, illiberal and extreme; but the company of the chief of the Fathers of Israel may be considered satisfactory. These four considerations which have last had attention, meet with united force against the money membership Laws of the Bible Society, and justify our assertion that these laws form a basis of association not warranted by Scripture.

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## LETTER XI.

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7, and finally. It was asserted of these Laws III and V, *that they afford no exercise of Faith.* Self-conceited and self-confident fool! Saul's soldiers seem to have exclaimed when David went forth without armour to meet Goliath. But David was at once a

man of faith and the man after God's own heart. To make so small account of armour, seemed folly ; so now to make small account of money and worldly plans, appliances and policy in such work as that of the Bible Society, seems weakness and folly. But are we not to become fools that we may become wise ? and when weak before God are we not strong ?

As Moses put off the shoes from his feet when he drew nigh to God, so the Christian, the nearer he draws to God in the spirit of true service, the more he puts off the things and the ways of the world and the flesh. It was when Isaiah felt himself undone and without any power in himself, that the live coal from off the altar was put upon his lips, and he was fitted, by sign and in fact, for the service which he had been called to accomplish.

It will always be easier to characterise faith than to exercise it ; and in the exercise of faith there is no difficulty so great as the proper use of means. The man of faith does not trust in means, and yet does not despise them. Thus, a basket was once used by Paul as means of deliverance, and at another time, boards and broken pieces of the ship ; but these very instances, as well as sketches of faith supplied in the Old Testament history, show that the simplest and least possible means are used when God most signally interposes and helps his servants.

Thus, the five small loaves and the widow's empty oil vessels were used, but in such wise as to honour the Lord and to make means of no account. The principle would seem to be as little means as possible, and as much faith as possible ; for in proportion as means are used and trusted, faith fails. Thus it was when David's faith failed, that he went down to Ziklag and *joined himself* to the enemies of the Lord ; and so faith had failed when he set to numbering his people and his resources. Faith looks to God, not to circumstances. Means must not interfere with the action of faith.

It is on this principle, and upon such grounds as these, that the Bible Society has been asked to abolish its money laws, as contrary to His mind and to trust Him, for all—and more than all—it could ever have hoped to secure by those laws. It has been well said, that the fall was perpetrated when Adam ceased to have faith in God. Man is fallen, and his nature is unbelief. “ Believe in the

Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved;" thus believing, the restoration comes by Christ, and he says to his disciples, "Have faith in God." The whole action is henceforward to be in faith; hence, "whatever is not of faith is sin;" and the further on the soul gets in the moral recovery the nearer to God, the further away from mere means, the more and the higher the faith; and there seems in truth scarcely any limit to its exercise. "It is the gift of God;" but it is also a power committed to be used, vested by and through Christ in the believer, else what does he mean when he says, "According to your faith be it unto you?" "He that believeth shall not make haste,"—he shall not run about to do God's part of the work himself.

Only let us be sure that this work of Bible dissemination is the Lord's,—that we are not unlawfully using means,—that we are his servants in it,—and that we are associated with his servants, and then there is the warrant for faith, but not apart from these conditions. No sign of this may be given, for faith is above signs; and faith counts things that are not as though they were. It sees that to *ask* and to *have* is the conjoint privilege of the believer who is doing the Lord's work. We have the Word of God in its teachings, principles, and examples; we, therefore, need no special sign, nor is any given.

But alas for our unbelief—it is our besetting sin; it is the generic sin of believers, in this sense the besetting sin. "O ye of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt." "He could not do many works there because of their unbelief." How the Lord calls for faith, and commends and honours it when it is found.

But dear friends in the Bible Society must see the money law of their beloved Society, and must see a body of members erected upon it and upheld by it,—they must see these pillars of support for the Society; and for the rest, just where they cannot intermeddle, namely, when the Book comes into contact with souls, they of course leave that altogether to God. If we trust Him to bless and make efficacious the book we distribute, may we not trust Him to protect and sustain the Society which has the distribution of the book for its object?

Luther saw two miracles—the vaulted heaven supported without pillars, and the great ocean of clouds rolling over him, and yet no

foundation on which they rested, nor any shore to keep them back. These visions helped his faith; may they not help ours?

There exist, it has been said, so to speak, two Germanys, the one sceptical, the other of evangelical faith. If there is a deeper scepticism there than elsewhere, there is also a higher faith. These extremes are thus met most strikingly in Germany; and there, accordingly, we find work for God upon a simplicity of plan, with a thoroughness, with a power of prayer and a loftiness of faith found no where else. Thus the works for God of Falk, of Wichern, of Fliedner, of Gorsner, of Harms, and the earlier one of Franche, are wonderful monuments of the power and prevalence of faith and prayer. Let them be adduced as examples and illustrations of the success which follows working for God in God's way.

It is one's profound conviction that greatly owned and used of God as the British and Foreign Bible Society has been, it would have been owned and used still more if it had acted upon faith and prayer, as exemplified by those noble men of the land of Luther.

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## LETTER XII.

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Once again one must beg to be excused if a single topic takes up two letters. But let the testimony of faith and the confession to the lack of it, from the last report of the British and Foreign Bible Society,—an acceptable authority in this case,—be recorded here:

"Of all the wants which press upon us in the present day, and which ought to lead us to wrestle continually with God in prayer for its supply, the most urgent is that of faith. Were our Scriptures to be multiplied indefinitely, and our resources enlarged to double their present amount, these would give no security for the real advancement of our work; barriers which now hinder our entrance into countries where fanaticism is supreme, might still frown defiance upon our agents, and difficulties with which we have hitherto contended in vain might impede our progress with the same persistency as before. But at the command of faith mountains remove, and in the exercise of faith blessing is gained. Faith is the mainspring, without which all the wheels of Christian activity are useless, and even the most constant prayer of the Christian Church remain unanswered."

These are weighty words. If instead of hugging the coast of this world in its ways and modes of operation, the Church of Christ would, in her works, stand out to sea, her God-given chart in hand, ever bearing on in her course to the shores upon the other side, she would better illustrate faith. Some such course as this distinctly away from one side to the other of things wide as the seas asunder, the Apostle seems to suggest, when he says: "*Be not ye conformed to this world, but be ye transformed.*" It was said to God's ancient people, "*How long will it be ere ye believe me,*" and yet he walked and moved with that ancient people. Believers are now together with Christ. He abides in them, and they in Him. All things are theirs, because He is theirs. Yet how few believe on him unto salvation, and how few of his own people enter into the true life and walk of faith in him. "*When the Son of Man cometh shall he find faith on the earth?*" Is the Bible Society associated upon a principle, and acting in a way which gives scope, and exercise and illustration to faith? Already may not the judgment have been written, "*TEKEL, Thou art laid in the balance and found wanting?*"

These Letters now close. It will already have been manifest that more might have been made of the case in abler hands; such being true, let it, however, be kindly borne in mind that nothing systematic nor exhaustive was proposed to be written, but only so much as would convey a fair understanding of the question. It is hoped so much has been accomplished. And looking back for a moment on what has been written, imperfect though it is, one is really at a loss to see how all the first five objections to the money law can be successfully combatted. And as to the concluding two, since their object and tendency are to lead nearer to God in walk and work, and to a higher faith in walk and work, which should be paramount objects in the Bible Society,—to argue against these would seem to be fighting against God.

If, in conclusion, these Letters have fallen into a form which exhibits intelligibly what was proposed to be written; if the views of those who differ have been adequately and honorably stated; if there has been reasonable accuracy of thought; if they shall be satisfactory to yourself, dear sir and friend, to whom they are addressed; if they shall be convincing to any considerable number

of friends of the Bible Society, and shall be held to have vindicated a sounder law of membership, than that now in force ; if they are agreeable to the truth of Him, whose we are and whom we serve ; if, without much effort bestowed, these several aims shall prove to have been attained, that will be enough ; for that will be the best apology for what may be considered the assumption, and be compensation for what has been found to be the trouble, of their publication.

Montreal, April, 1865.

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### SUPPLEMENTARY LETTER.

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DEAR FRIEND,

You are kind enough, after carefully reading the foregoing Letters, to say :—

“It appears to me, that *ethically* and *religiously* you have advanced most powerful arguments in support of your position ; but I must admit I see difficulties in the practical carrying out of your principle in these degenerate times. I mean degenerate, inasmuch as the love of filthy lucre is the ruling passion with so many in the visible Church of Christ.”

Thanks for this criticism. It expresses what is believed to be also the opinion of many other excellent men, and as such, for your sake and theirs, it is entitled to most respectful consideration.

It allows that the position one has assumed has Scriptural support, and does not attempt by force of Scripture to dislodge one from it ; but practical difficulties are seen to be in the way, and these practical difficulties arise out of the degeneracy of the times and the love of filthy lucre. In other words one understands it to be this,—the money laws of the Bible Society cannot be justified on Scriptural grounds ; on the contrary, Scripture condemns them, and they should be abolished : but owing to the degeneracy of the times and the love of money, there are practical difficulties in the way of doing without these laws ; and therefore on the ground of expediency, even in opposition to what seems to be the sense of



Scripture in respect of them, they are retained in force. This kindly concedes no inconsiderable advantage. So far then it would appear that these laws have their best foundation on expediency. Now, to say nothing of the duty of endeavouring to arrest all tendencies to degeneracy, the practical question at once arises—is it lawful, because of apprehended practical difficulties in the way of a work for God, to go contrary to the admitted sense of Scripture, in order to escape such difficulties? And may we not, in the attempt to avoid these difficulties, fall into other and greater difficulties by substituting expediency for principle?

We deny its lawfulness, and its even being in any true sense expedient; and, like Jonah's flight from duty, it is flight from that path of faith in which believers are called upon to walk. Does it not, dear Sir, seem so in view of the admissions which have already been so frankly made, and which are thankfully acknowledged?

Suppose the Scriptures said *you shall not disseminate the Bible by means of Societies having a money membership law*. Bible Societies would never have established such a law, or, if this command were now for the first time spoken from heaven, it would be obeyed, and such law would be abolished. But if in the absence of such a command there is so much of Scripture in general statement, in principle, or in tendency bearing on the point, so as clearly to make out a sense or spirit adverse to such a money law, this should be as much appreciated and acted upon as a law or commandment would be, for there is in this at once appeal and approach to the spiritual sense of believers. "*But he that is spiritual judgeth all things.*" "*We have the mind of Christ.*"

How in respect of other questions do believers act? As to the Lord's day, for instance, is it not upon the basis of the given fact of the seventh day institution, that inferences and examples subsequently derived establish the present observance of the Lord's day?

As to Temperance—though agreeing with the author of "Biblical Temperance" that a prohibition in terms of law is found, yet upon the common opinion that no law of prohibition exists in the Bible, is not the law of love, that on which may best rest the temperance principles of believers. So the law of Faith requires the abolition of these money laws. So also as to Slavery, and slavery

has been tolerated, if not in some sense justified by good men, on the ground that there were practical difficulties in the way of its abolition, just as it is said there are practical difficulties in the way of the abolition of these money laws. All the argument in either case is—avoid what is difficult and may be dangerous.

Again, it is admitted by many that arguments for missions on the catholic basis cannot be controverted, but nevertheless asserted that a better state of the Church must come before they can be so carried on. So also it is replied to believers who contend for faith and a manifested unity in Christ, for His lordship over His people, and for the sovereignty of the Spirit in the Church, that these are indeed Scripture truths, but that a better state of the Church must come ere they can be practically regarded. Now let Christians begin to inaugurate the better state of the Church in respect of missions and of the recognition of these truths just stated, and also in respect of these money laws. Better now than later.

Once more, the tendency to fashion and extravagance and gaiety in the Church is best argued against not on the ground of any prohibition of Scripture in express terms concerning these evils; but on the ground that their whole influence is hurtful to piety—that they grieve and quench the Spirit, and draw the soul towards the world rather than towards God. In like manner, without assigning a law of prohibition, may not these money laws be condemned as worldly in character, as making too much account of means and money, and too little of faith?

Is it agreed that if the spirit and scope of Scripture make out or establish a sense or principle of Scripture, that sense or principle should influence and determine action as much as a text or commandment? Then, there should be obedience whatever practical difficulties may oppose, equally at least with what would be yielded to a command.

This not giving practical effect to what is believed to be Scriptural, keeps many Christians in positions which they do not feel to be satisfactory, and withholds testimony for truth which ought to be afforded.

If, in conclusion, friends of the Lord's Day, of Temperance, of catholic Missions, of the Slave, and those who want a purer and wider fellowship of believers, and those who oppose the worldly

tendencies of the Church,—are one in the sense already stated,—if all these are one, then, by parity of reasoning and upon their own principles, in their several particular applications, ought not these more thoughtful and matured members of the Church of Christ, and none others are expected, to adopt the more excellent way in respect also of this question, and give practical application to what evidently appears to be their duty?

Reckoning yourself, dear Sir, and many other respected Christian friends, as thus agreeing substantially upon the money question, though perhaps at present doubtful how far they should go, one must be excused for acting alone and nevertheless regarding with the highest consideration those with whom he so far differs. And with this, dear Sir, these Letters must end.

MONTREAL, April 21, 1865.